

Message Text

SECRET

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
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EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, LE, SY, IS

SUBJECT: LEBANON

1. PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH BEGIN AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE ON
AUGUST 31 TO REPORT THE FOLLOWING:

-- ISRAELI CONCERNS OVER THE SITUATION IN LEBANON WERE
COMMUNICATED TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO THE SECRETARY.

-- A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY IS BEING CONVEYED TO ASSAD
CALLING ON HIM TO BRING ABOUT AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE AND
STANDFAST OF SYRIAN FORCES. THE MESSAGE URGES MORE
SPECIFICALLY THAT SYRIAN FORCES STOP OR CUT DOWN THEIR

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MOVEMENT THROUGH AREAS WHERE PROVOCATIONS FROM ELEMENTS
HOSTILE TO SYRIANS ARE LIKELY TO OCCUR. THIS CALL IS A
VIRTUAL EQUIVALENT OF A CALL FOR A UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE BY
SYRIA, FOR THE MESSAGE URGES THAT SUCH STEPS AS FURTHER
DISENGAGEMENT AND PULLBACK TO BETTER PROTECTIVE POSITIONS
SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. THE PRESIDENT WILL CONSIDER CARE-
FULLY WHETHER IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SEND MESSAGE OF HIS

OWN IN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE MEETINGS AT CAMP DAVID.

-- THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO ASSAD ALSO CONVEYS A CLEAR SENSE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF ISRAELI CONCERNS AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT, IF CONFRONTATIONS CONTINUE, THE ISRAELIS MAY BECOME MORE INVOLVED THAN THEY ARE NOW. WE ARE SPECIFICALLY ASKING THE SYRIANS FOR THE UTMOST PRUDENCE AND FORBEARANCE AS REGARDS THE POSSIBILITY OF CLASHES IN LEBANESE AIR SPACE.

-- EVEN WHILE BEGIN, DAYAN AND WEIZMAN WERE MEETING WITH YOU ON THE 30TH, SEELYE WAS MAKING STRONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE MFA IN KHADDAM'S ABSENCE. THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER PROMISED TO CONVEY SEELYE'S REPRESENTATIONS TO ASSAD, AND WE MIGHT NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE SYRIANS EMULATE THE ISRAELI CUSTOM OF KEEPING ALMOST VERBATIM RECORDS OF SUCH IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WHICH THEY USE FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION. YOU SHOULD DRAW FREELY ON SEELYE'S REPORT.

-- IN ADDITION, IN WASHINGTON, WE CALLED IN THE SYRIAN CHARGE TODAY TO PARALLEL SEELYE'S DEMARCHE, DURING WHICH WE INDICATED THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT SOME SYRIAN MILITARY OFFICERS IN LEBANON WERE CLEARLY GOING BEYOND THE POLICY
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GUIDELINES WHICH DAMASCUS HAD TOLD US WAS OFFICIAL. WE INDICATED THAT, FOR THIS REASON ALONE, QUESTIONS ABOUT ULTIMATE SYRIAN OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON WERE WIDESPREAD.

-- ALTHOUGH WE ASK THAT THIS BE KEPT IN CONFIDENCE, WE WANT ISRAELIS TO KNOW THAT WE ARE ALSO MAKING MAJOR APPROACHES TO OTHER KEY GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCE IN SYRIA.

-- WE WILL KEEP BEGIN CLOSELY INFORMED OF THESE AND OTHER EFFORTS. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, LIKE TO MAKE TWO POINTS:

-- FIRST, ISRAELI NEWS REPORTS FOLLOWING YOUR MEETING ON THE 30TH INDICATING THAT ISRAEL ASKED THE U.S. TO TRANSMIT "A WARNING" TO SYRIA MAKES OUR TASK OF INFLUENCING THE SYRIANS PRIVATELY MORE DIFFICULT. FYI. IT IS WHOLLY POSSIBLE THAT SEELYE--IN DELIVERING MESSAGE--WOULD BE ASKED WHETHER HE WAS CARRYING ISRAELI "WARNING", AND SYRIANS WOULD REFUSE TO RECEIVE HIM IF HE SAID YES. END
FYI.

-- SECOND, WE MUST ALSO ASK ISRAEL, AS WE ARE SYRIA, TO

EXERCISE MAXIMUM FORBEARANCE AND PRUDENCE WITH REGARD TO
ITS FLIGHTS OVER LEBANESE TERRITORY SO AS TO AVOID
INADVERTENT CLASHES WITH SYRIAN AIRCRAFT. WE HOPE THAT
SOME CONSIDERATION COULD BE GIVEN TO ARRANGING THESE OVER-
FLIGHTS AT TIMES AND IN WAYS WHICH WILL NOT BE VIEWED AS
AN OPEN CHALLENGE TO THE SYRIANS. SOME OF THIS RESTRAINT

IS ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO CONVINCE THE SYRIANS TO STAND
DOWN. CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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